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Francis P. Jones, Editor

Rowland M. Cross, Exec. Sec'y
Wallace C. Merwin, Assoc. Sec'y

COMMUNIST DEMOCRACY IN ACTION

The Third Session of the Foochow city People's Council began last August. On July 27 the Chairman of the Religious Affairs Bureau called together representatives of the various religions, and informed them that they were entitled to six representatives in the People's Council. After discussion together it was agreed that these six should be assigned as follows: Three to the Protestants, two to Buddhists, and one to the Roman Catholics. On the next day an enlarged session of the Church Reform Committee was held, with "the responsible person" from each of the church units of the city present. At this meeting the method of election for their representatives was agreed upon.

On July 31, representatives of all the local units met with the Chairman of the Religious Affairs Bureau, who gave them a lecture on the difference between democratic procedure under Communism and that in capitalist countries. As to the representatives elected, these should have (1) a firm political attitude, with a record of accomplishment in opposing imperialism, (2) sympathy with the people, and (3) a real desire to serve. As for the election itself, he warned them against (1) 'localism, the idea that representation should be by places, (2) carelessness in procedure, (3) emphasis on personal advantage, and (4) insistence on face-saving.

Following this, on the afternoon and evening of the same day all the local churches elected their official delegates. They were entitled to one for every member or major fraction thereof, counting only members over 18 years of age. In this way a total of 124 delegates from all the churches of Foochow were elected, representing Methodist, Anglican, Congregational (CCC), Little Flock, Seventh Day Adventists, True Jesus Church, and YMCA. On

August 2 these delegates met in the Methodist T'ien An T'ang to elect their three representatives. After the opening worship service, they separated by denominational groups to make nominations, and came back together with a total of 15 nominations. Each of the nominees was then called before the group to make a brief report concerning himself, under the following points: (1) what work they had been doing in the church in the three years since liberation, (2) in particular, what they have done to oppose imperialism, (3) what part they have played in the Three Self Reform Movement, and (4) a frank appraisal of their own strong and weak points.

In the afternoon the 124 delegates separated into six discussion groups to consider all the candidates' reports and criticize them. Then they came back together, and the chairman of each discussion group reported to the whole body the results of the discussion in his own group. They were then ready to proceed to the actual election. There were 119 ballots cast, with three names on each. Ch'en Chih-mei (Jimmy Ding, Meth.) received 113 votes, Hsiao P'ing-hsi 92, and P'eng Ch'i-hsi 61 votes on the first ballot, and so these three were declared elected. The article (in Tien Feng for October 18, 1952) closes with a characteristic analysis of their experience, and points for improvement in election procedure and attitudes for next time.

For our own analysis, we may point out that the campaigning is controlled by the voters rather than by the candidates, with the voters taking the initiative in securing the information by which to make an intelligent selection. On the other hand, the close direction by the government Bureau and the Church Reform Committee throughout the whole procedure suggests a considerable degree of staged puppetry, rather than a perfectly free election.

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THE NEW CANTON MAYOR

Ho Wei was elected mayor of Canton on December 30. He is a native of Junan, Honan, and is identified by Tom Lee as a former student of his in Junan, where his name was Ho Heng-te. He and his whole family were members of the church there. Heng-te graduated from Hua Chung University in political science in 1935. After that he became a youth group organizer, and then dropped out of sight. After liberation he reappeared in Wuhan with the new name of Ho Wei, and became General Secretary of the Wuhan Military Council. He lived and made his headquarters in the Lutheran Missions Home and Agency, for he was a Christian. Later he made an address to the united churches of Hupeh, in which, though he admitted he had been a Christian, he was critical of the church for its failures and superstitions, and pointed out the glorious Utopia of Communism. After something over a year in Hankow, he was moved to Kwangsi, where he was an important figure for about 18 months before coming to Canton. Canton reports picture him, for obvious reasons, as a self-made peasant's son, who took part in the Long March. Actually he came from a well-to-do family of the sort now classified as Landlord, and he was a student in a mission university at the time of the Long March. Mr. Lee states that there can be no question as to the identification of the man.

THE NEW CHURCH MAGAZINE

Editor Ch'en Chien-hsun, who had just returned from his Comfort Mission in Korea, reported in the Jan. 1 number on the first five months of the magazine's publication. His report, as summarized by Tom Lee, is as follows:

"The *New Church* was founded by the Religious Tract Society and the Lutheran Church of China. Originally, the magazine in its earlier form had belonged to the Lutheran Church and was known as *Hsin Yi Pao* (Lutheran Weekly). The reformed magazine was registered with the Central South Military Council in July 1952, and its first issue was published on August 1, 1952. There are five people on the staff, four editors and one sales agent. During Editor Ch'en's absence in Korea, Prof. Hsieh Shou-ling of Central China Theological Seminary in Wuhan served as editor until Mr. Ch'en's return in December.

"Ten issues have been published to date, with a total of 164 pages, and 170 articles under the three general groupings as follows:

1. On opposing imperialism and loving one's country.
Current Events.
Study of politics, and correcting one's thinking.
2. Dealing with matters of religious faith.
3. News of the Three Self Reform Movement in Wuhan and the Nation.
Reconstruction of the Motherland
International Peace Movements.

Mr. Ch'en adds that the last two subjects are most important. He has used materials from Government magazines, which are important from the political point of view, and helpful to rural people. He admits that there is a dearth of church news.

MISSIONARY NEWS

Miss Helen Willis is still continuing work in the Christian Book room in Shanghai. A letter from her, dated January 20, 1953, has the following news: "People speak encouragingly of improved conditions since a year ago. There is a young man here back from the border of Tibet where he and his wife are working. He speaks of promise of revival all through China. Jonathan (a Christian publisher and teacher in Shanghai) tells me of good work among the Friends in Nanking, and the conversions at Luho. He himself is very busy with teaching and writing. I am much encouraged by increased sales of literature, which I feel is a good sign. I have heard that there is a good and earnest spirit in the united Bible Schools (probably the Chinling Union Theological Seminary in Nanking), and the Bible is upheld. Thirty students graduate soon, and forty more in the spring, leaving only 32. The question of a united bookstore still looms. Yesterday someone was in from Kashing, Che., with a list of books, and took back with him almost half of the different kinds we have. Mr. Mortensen is leaving this week, the last of the missionaries waiting in Shanghai. His friends say they hope to see him back in a year."

Two recent letters from Peking tell of active student work with meetings in Peking Union church, possibly a part of the Varsity Fellowship movement, though the writer does not say so. He tells of one prayer meeting, held in the last weeks of December, which lasted for 17 hours, from 7 p. m. Saturday evening until noon of the next day, in a room with temperature not far above freezing. He himself helped to prepare hot bowls of millet gruel for them, which were served about midnight. Nearly 200 students took part in this meeting. Peking Union Church continues to serve the foreign community in Peking. It has seven trustees, four of them being from Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and Finland respectively. Bibles are being sold there, which are printed on good paper, with clear print and strongly bound. They sell for about one day's wage of a carpenter.

We have just received from Hongkong Tom Lee's letter dated Feb. 19, and are sorry to report that this will be his last letter from there, as he is leaving for furlough. Much of our information of the past year has come from his letters, and we shall miss him greatly. He will not arrive in the States until June, and his address then will be c/o Nummedals, 3350 Clinton Ave. S., Minneapolis, Minn. Mr. Lee is a missionary of the Lutheran United Mission, and was formerly in Hankow.

CHURCH NEWS

Last fall a government "Comfort Mission" of 1091 persons visited Chinese troops in Korea. In the Mission were the following Christian leaders: Ch'en Chien-hsun, Lutheran editor of the *New Church*, Hankow, Bishop Mao K'e-chung, Episcopal Church Shanghai, and Sun P'eng-hsi, Chairman of the Church of Christ in China for Northeast China. Each of these has been reporting on the Mission since their return, Editor Ch'en in the *New Church* for Jan. 16, Sun P'eng-hsi in *Tien Feng* for Jan. 17, and Bishop Mao in a source not indicated (reported by Tom Lee).

Progress in self-support is reported in *Tien Feng* for Jan. 17. "The desire on the part of Christians to contribute funds has greatly increased. In some places evangelistic workers are engaged in labor and productive occupations. There are special places like Nanking, where there are special methods for the use of the buildings, equipment, and funds of the churches. These are pooled under the control of one group, which parcels them out to each congregation according to their needs. From the self-propagation point of view, the Christian workers are studying what they shall preach. They are feeling their way for the present." This is part of a general report by the national Reform Committee on the occasion of its second anniversary.

The reference to the special methods in use in Nanking explains how the Nanking Reform Committee was able to make the Nanking Church Council building on Han Chia Hsiang available to the Huang Ni Kang independent church when it was ousted from its Huang Ni Kang quarters. (See Bulletin for Dec. 15.)

The 24 churches of Chungking organized an official Reform Committee on Dec. 26 at a meeting where they were represented by 102 delegates. This Committee has been recognized by the national Reform Committee.

Newsdom, a pro-Nationalist weekly in Hongkong, reports (Feb. 14) that Premier Chou En-lai called together the Christian leaders of the country in October to meet two Russian Christians. At that time the Premier said, "Soviet Russia is willing to unite in assisting our religious development to move a step forward. She is willing to help each group to develop an international character. We ought to seriously consider this offer, and immediately accept it." The only reported protest to that statement came from Li Chun-wu, Roman Catholic leader, who stated that they were there only in their individual capacity, and could not commit their organizations. The attitude of the Protestant leader at that meeting, Liu Yueh-po, was not stated. *Newsdom* concludes, "The news that Russia wants to send preachers to China was rumored two years ago, when it was reported that Russia was training 5000 priests and pastors whom they were planning to send to China to take the place of the reactionary leaders in the churches there." Nationalist news emanating

from Hongkong is always to be taken *cum grano salis*, and this may be only a perversion or misunderstanding of the Sino-Soviet Friendship Month celebrated throughout China in November. The Jan. 31 *Tien Feng* gives four of its 16 pages to an address by Russian Metropolitan Nicolai on the subject, "The Struggle of the Church and the People on One Way for World Peace."

The East China Conference of the Methodist Church has been able to keep up its Conference news bulletin, of which Gad Zau was formerly, and may still be, editor, as a November number of *Tien Feng* quotes from it. However, that Conference's Adult Education program has stopped.

A direct report from Shanghai tells of one of the churches there, where the pastor, who has preached in that church for many years, is preaching to a full church every Sunday.

Bishop Z. T. Kaung held a committee meeting in Shanghai on Dec. 8 and 9 to arrange for a meeting of the East China Conference of the Methodist Church. The Government does not give automatic permission for the holding of such Conferences. This committee meeting, according to the report in *Tien Feng* for Dec. 22, was dominated by Liu Liang-mo and the East China Religious Affairs Department, who told the Methodists that the Conference could only be held if its central theme were "Opposing the enemy, loving one's country, and furthering the Three Self Reform," and that furthermore it must be preceded by a preparatory period of studies. Presumably the Methodists accepted the conditions, but no date was announced for the Conference session.

Louis Tsai, Nanchang, reports in Jan. 17 *Tien Feng* that the Protestants, Catholics, and Buddhists of Kiangsi have set up a permanent united organization.

SCHOOL NEWS

Further identifications are at hand of the Board of Directors of the reorganized Chin Ling Union Theological Seminary in Nanking. Han Wen-tsao is Executive Secretary of the Nanking Church Reform Committee, Chu Kwei-sheng is head of the Spiritual Work (Ling Kung) Church in Shanghai, Rev. Ch'i Ch'ing-ts'ai is chairman of the Baptist Church, and Huang P'ei-yung is one of the National Secretaries of the YMCA. On the whole the Board is one to inspire confidence.

On Dec. 9 the students of this Seminary in a special meeting joined the government sponsored Students Association.

Rev. Calvin Cao is now Principal of the Singapore Theological Seminary (CIM-OMF) which has nine students enrolled.

GENERAL NEWS

One of the delegates at the Peace Conference in Peking last October has sent out a very optimistic report concerning the real desire